



October 21, 2009

For Immediate Release

RE: First Annual Minority Male Empowerment Summit

On October 15 and 16th, 2009 members from the Northwest Indiana joint chapter of the Student African American Brotherhood/Brother 2 Brother (SAAB/B2B) traveled to the IUPUI campus in Indianapolis, IN to attend the First Annual Minority Male Empowerment Summit. The following members were in attendance:

Dr. Ken Coopwood, Director of Diversity and Equity & Assistant to the Chancellor

Alan Roger Currie, SAAB/B2B Coordinator, IU Northwest

Joe Goodman, SAAB/B2B Graduate Assistant, IU Northwest

James Wallace, SAAB President, Northwest Indiana Chapter, IU Northwest

David Neal, Student Activities Chairman, IU Northwest

Kehinda Pryor, Secretary, Ivy Tech Community College, East Chicago Campus

Henry Powell, SAAB/B2B member IU Northwest

Brandon Jones, SAAB/B2B mentor IU Northwest

The First Annual Minority Empowerment Summit is the brainchild of **James E. Garrett, Jr.**, the Executive Director of the Indiana Commission on the Social Status of Black Males and **Philip Seabrook**, the Assistant Vice President with the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Multicultural Affairs. These two organizations partnered with five other organizations to bring college students from around the state to discuss issues paramount to minorities in education. The other groups involved were the Student African American Brotherhood/Brother 2 Brother, 100 Black Men of Indianapolis, the Indiana Commission on Hispanic / Latino Relations, the Indiana Black Expo, USA Funds and of course the hosts at IUPUI.

An aggressive agenda was set for the students. After the initial reception, participating college students were split into groups and participated in a Minority Male Research Project being conducted by Dr. Robin Hughes of the IUPUI School of African American Studies. During these sessions they were asked a series of open ended questions regarding the minority male experience in higher education. Of central concern were the challenges that were specific to the minority condition. Some effort was also expended to determine how welcome men of color were made to feel on our respective campuses and the things that could be done to support each other in the quest for a degree. Lively group discussions soon followed. Mr. Philip Seabrook laid out the agenda for the following day. Towards 9:00 pm members adjourned for the evening among much networking and picture taking. SAAB/B2B members and other students returned to their hotels in preparation for day two of the summit.

Phillip Seabrook (far left) poses with statewide members of the Student African American Brotherhood/ Brother to Brother Chapters





Day two was an exciting day for the student participants of the Minority Male Empowerment Summit as they were afforded the opportunity to go to schools in the Indianapolis, IN area and speak to high school and middle school students regarding the issues which affect their lives. Students were sent to four schools in the area. These included Southport High School, School 56, Indy Met Academy and Andrew J. Brown School. The focus was on preparing them for college. The mission was to not only dispel some of the myths regarding college but to encourage the students to excel in their studies. On this day SAAB/B2B members were joined by noted author, activist and public speaker Kevin Powell of Brooklyn, New York. Mr. Powell held the students in rapt attention as he spoke about the importance of education and the need to make the right decisions as they navigate through life.



After words from Mr. Powell the students were separated into groups of 15 and the individual SAAB/B2B members in attendance conducted group discussions for the remaining portion of the visit. The spotlight was on getting the students to be as candid as possible while engaging the students on the issues that were important to them.

Returning to the IUPUI campus for lunch SAAB/B2B members then screened a powerful film called **4 Our Sons**. This documentary discussed the challenges faced by several different men from around the country as they struggled against enormous odds to provide for themselves and their families. The focal point was on the social, economic, personal and political factors which prevented these men from reaching their full potential. The movie also stressed the need for positive male role models in the lives of today's youth. After the viewing there was another discussion among the gathered students regarding the importance of this theme.



The final portion of the Summit allowed the gathered SAAB/B2B chapters a chance to fellowship together over dinner and discuss the challenges and successes of the individual chapters spread throughout the state. These discussions were vital in that they allowed the SAAB/B2B members to discard processes that have proven ineffective and concentrate our forces on ideas that will allow this student organization to grow as our members reach the ultimate goal of graduation. The Summit was closed out with a stirring poem crafted by SAAB/B2B member Kehinda Pryor entitled "My Brothers' Keeper." The First Annual Minority Empowerment Summit was an insightful, educational and beneficial exercise for not only the SAAB/B2B members' fortunate enough to attend but for the middle school and high school students who participated as well. Special thanks for funding and assistance for the trip goes to Dr. Ken D. Coopwood, Sr., Director of Diversity and Equity & Assistant to the Chancellor at IU Northwest, Dr. Charles Gary, Director of Student Life and Athletics IU Northwest, Alan Roger Currie, Coordinator for the SAAB/B2B program, Joe Goodman and Kasey Hernandez, the SAAB/B2B Graduate Assistants.



Kehinda Pryor, Phillip Seabrook, James Wallace, Kevin Powell, Hollis Thomas, James Garrett and Joe Goodman pose after delivering a powerful message to the youth at Southport High.